

## Message Text

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UNCLAS SEOUL 0089

FOR OIFI - DON LINVILLE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, KS

SUBJECT: INVESTMENT/LICENSING OPPORTUNITY -  
EXTRUDED NEOPRENE JOINTS

1. WILBUR SMITH CONSULTING ENGINEERS NOW PREPARING FINAL DESIGN AND ACTING AS SUPERVISING CONSULTANTS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND PAVING AND UPGRADING SOME 800 KILOMETERS OF HIGHWAYS HAVE COME TO US FOR ASSISTANCE REGARDING MANUFACTURE OF EXTRUDED NEOPRENE JOINTS IN KOREA.

2. KOREA IS NOW USING EXPANSION JOINTS OF STEEL CONSTRUCTION ON HIGHWAY BRIDGES. THIS IS EXPENSIVE AND PROVEN UNSATISFACTORY. ROKG MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION IS INTERESTED IN EXTRUDED NEOPRENE JOINTS WHICH NOW IN GENERAL USE IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR PAST 10 YEARS.

3. HOYT LEVIS OF WILBUR SMITH HOME OFFICE IN COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA HAS CONTACTED ROBERT HOTTLE, SALES MANAGER OF ACME HIGHWAY PRODUCTS CORPORATION OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK, AREA CODE 716 TELEPHONE 876-0123. ROKG IS SPECIFICALLY INTERESTED IN ACME'S ACMASEAL TYPE H JOINT FOR USE IN CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BRIDGES BUT WOULD PREFER MANUFACTURE IN KOREA. ACCELERATED HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM IS ENVISAGED IN NEXT FEW YEARS. HOTTLE OF ACME WAS INTERESTED IN SALES PROMOTION ONLY.

4. IN VIEW OF BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION AND ALSO BUILDING ACTIVITY  
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IN KOREA WHICH CAN ALSO USE SUCH EXTRUDED NEOPRENE JOINTS,

WE AGREED TO CONSULT WITH COMMERCE AND ASCERTAIN WHETHER COMMERCE  
WOULD DISCUSS WITH ACME FOLLOWING QUESTIONS--

A. WOULD ACME BE INTERESTED IN PRODUCING BRIDGE EXPANSION  
JOINTS AND RELATED BUILDING PRODUCTS IN KOREA?

B. KOREA PRESENTLY REQUIRES JOINT-VENTURE TYPE ARRANGEMENT  
WITH KOREAN INTERESTS.

C. WOULD LOCAL MANUFACTURING REFLECT SUBSTANTIAL COST  
SAVINGS FROM REDUCTION IN LABOR COSTS?

D. IF MANUFACTURING OF PRODUCTS IN KOREA IS ATTRACTIVE  
TO ACME, CAN YOU ESTIMATE THE TIME REQUIRED TO BEGIN PRODUCTION?

E. CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES UNDER DESIGN WOULD PROBABLY START  
IN MID 1975.

F. WHAT IS YOUR BEST ESTIMATE OF COST SAVING (IF ANY) THAT  
COULD BE OBTAINED BY MANUFACTURING IN KOREA?

5. COMMERCE MAY KNOW OF POSSIBLE INTEREST BY OTHER U.S. FIRMS,  
AND THIS OPPORTUNITY MAY THUS BE GERMANE FOR THEM. IN ANY CASE,  
EMBASSY WOULD BE PLEASED TO ASSIST U.S. FIRM EITHER IN PROMOTION  
OR IN LICENSING ARRANGEMENT WITH APPROPRIATE KOREAN AGENT/  
MANUFACTURER. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR REPLY SO THAT WE CAN  
DISCUSS MATTER FURTHER WITH WILBUR SMITH AND ROKG OFFICIALS.  
ERICSON

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